

The Angel of Purgatory.

How many sweet reminiscences this recalls to a Christian mind.

MONTH OF THE DEAD.

November, "the month of yellow leaves," in the expressive language of the Iroquois, turns our thoughts to the realities of life and that which lies beyond. Along the upland hills the part-ridge whistles in the twilight, the chill wind blows across the stubble, the leaves snap and fall, or flutter desolately upon the quivering boughs, and the thin, blue mist of autumn lies upon every valley.

"The pale, descending year, yet pleasing still
A gentle mood inspires. For now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove,
Oft startling such as studious, walk below,
And slowly circles thro' the waving air."

It is a time when "The desolated prospect thrills the soul." It is the month of the dead. Nature, herself, seems to sorrow over her departed children. If we look across the blackened fields, something in the lessened brightness of the sun, in the whispers of the falling leaves, in the rustle of the dry, dead grasses, remind us of those who have passed on "into the Silent Land." Across such fields as these, at such a time as this, perhaps a father's voice once called us. In such a twilight, perhaps, a mother once watched our home-coming, standing patiently beside the farm-yard gate, while the sharp winds tangled and tumbled her beloved hair. It may be, too, that across the fields lies the little cemetery, where one dear to us is sleeping—husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister, or cousin. O, the wind is sad from walking among the graves of our dead, and the sun is sad, and the leaves that softly fall and cover their places of quiet rest!

Their bodies lie here, but their souls—how is with these? The forms of those beloved may now be ashes, but *that* which made them what *they were*, we feel assured, yet lives on. They exist elsewhere. Is it well with them? It is an hour before day closes; let us pray for those departed. All things conspire to move us to prayer—"the dim religious light" of failing day, the murmur of the bells across the meadows, the sighing of the wind within the melancholy branches. If the wide out-sweeping meadows, saddened by the loitering feet of autumn, recall sweet memories of those who loved us while they lived, are we not moved, reflecting how they may be even now in prison paying the last farthing, to ask our Lord to be merciful to them and forgive the debt. If the yellow leaves fall in schools into the frosty hollows about us, think how lonelier are they in the place where they abide. While they lived on earth, although they loved us, we know they were not perfect, and shall we hear their cries and moans for rest, borne to us, so it seems, on every passing wind, and not ask God to be merciful to them?

Thus to the devout Catholic all visible Nature speaks. He is a rapt dweller in another world. Always his dead are with him, since constantly his prayers go up for them, and faith teaches him to believe that they in their abode may intercede for him. The Church Triumphant in Heaven, the Church Suffering in Purgatory, the Church Militant on earth, all these are bound together "by gold chains of prayer," helping, cheering, sustaining each other in that holy communion